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SUBJECT: UPDATE #3: Sudan Unrelenting in Public
Rejection of UN Rehatting

REF: Khartoum 467

¶1. SUMMARY: Heavy government public opposition to UN intervention in Darfur enters its second week as President Bashir expressed his uncompromising opposition to UN re-hatting. Cabinet members, political parties, and pro-government newspapers and civic organizations also continue to express their opposition to such a move with increasing vitriol. A few voices supporting the UN have started to rise, but even some of these groups fear the negative repercussions of re-hatting should resistance to the UN turn violent. End Summary.

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Bashir and the Government Stay On The Offensive
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¶2. Speaking to a group in Khartoum calling itself the All-Darfurian Conference, President Bashir reiterated his belief that foreign intervention caused the crisis in Darfur and now would only make it worse. He explained that the African Union (AU) was brought in as an alternative to further international intervention and that their problems were due to funding issues and a change in tactics on the ground. He also said that the AU was only considering re-hatting due to intensive international pressure, another form of foreign interference. Newspapers also report that Bashir called Libyan President Qadhafi to discuss the issue, while Ghana's president reportedly spoke out in favor of an African solution to Darfur.

¶3. Other members of the government have been even more direct and hostile. Interior Minister Zubair Taha, responding to reports that he has been named for possible targeted UN sanctions (UNSCR 1591), said on February 23 that only George Bush and his "junta" should be on a sanctions list, citing a litany of human rights violations throughout US history. He claimed that Darfur was created by the west to get better access to Sudan's resources, and that the targeted sanctions list and the UN re-hatting were elements of "neo-colonialism." Taha also asserted that the AU had no authority to call for a re-hatting.

¶4. In a separate interview on February 27, the Justice Minister Muhammed Ali al-Maradi denied that the International Criminal Court (ICC) could exercise jurisdiction in Darfur, called the UN Human Rights Commissioner biased, and said he was "fed up" with SRSG Jan Pronk. The day before, Presidential Advisor and Former Foreign Minister Mustafa Ishmail told an Arabic-language newspaper that he has proof that Israel ignited the crisis in Darfur and has trained a number of rebel leaders including Al-Shariff Harir. That same day, February 26, the full cabinet met and declared its

support of the AU, its desire for a peaceful resolution in Darfur, and its united front against foreign intervention.

Other Organizations Maintain Pressure

¶5. Meanwhile, the daily editorials against the re-hatting have continue unabated, with the pro-government Sudan Vision suggesting that the wide rejection of foreign interference demonstrates the will of the people and that the UN should respect this "democratic process." Newspapers also reported a demonstration in Nyala against the intervention during Pronk's weekend visit, although sources on the ground say that participation was minimal.

¶6. Civil organizations and other political parties continue to weigh in against the intervention, with the Popular Committee for Defending Creed and Homeland announcing a demonstration on March 1 in Khartoum. The much smaller and even more radical Sudanese Islamic Scholars Association has called for a Jihad to resist the international intervention. Even the Archbishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church in Sudan, a splinter group from the mainstream Episcopal Church, said that this was an African problem requiring an African solution.

¶7. After last week's meeting of political parties (reftel), even more parties within the government have issued statements opposing the UN. The Al-Hindi faction of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which joined the government ahead of the mainstream DUP, and the Democratic Party in the National Assembly have referred

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to the intervention as an "invasion," with the latter saying it would become another Iraq. The Communist Party, which joined the government as part of the National Democratic Alliance, said that they oppose the government's policies in Darfur but rejected the presence of the UN.

The Other Side Speaks, with Caution

¶8. As the controversy continues some voices supporting UN intervention have emerged. The Citizen, a southern-oriented independent newspaper, printed an editorial calling UN intervention "absolutely necessary." The spokesperson for the rebel Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) also told reporters that foreign intervention should be used to safeguard peace, as it had done in Nuba Mountains, the south, and the east. However, the pro-south independent Khartoum Monitor printed an editorial that supports UN intervention in principle, but worried that the resistance to any UN force would lead to increased violence, a curtailment of aid delivery due to insecurity, and possibly even the rise of al-Qaida in Darfur.

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